The first UK production for more than 40 years

THE NON-STOP CONNOLLY SHOW
A DRAMATIC CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE IN SIX PARTS

by Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden.


A production commissioned by the Finborough Theatre to commemorate the centenary of Dublin's Easter Rising of 1916, Margaretta D'Arcy and John Arden's epic retelling of the life story of Easter Rising leader James Connolly, The Non-Stop Connolly Show runs at the Finborough Theatre, playing Sunday and Monday evenings from Monday, 4 April 2016 (Press Night: Monday, 4 April 2016 at 7.00pm), culminating in two all-day "come and go as you please" performances of the entire play cycle on the anniversary of the Easter Rising itself – Saturday, 23 April and Sunday, 24 April.

Presented as a staged reading, The-Non Stop Connolly Show charts in epic verse and stirring dialogue the life and career Ireland's greatest revolutionary, James Connolly, from his birth in Scotland through his political maturation in Ireland and America to his last moments in front of a British firing squad.

First seen in a 24 hour performance in Dublin at Easter 1975, this ambitious revival – directed by exciting Irish director Shane Dempsey – will be the first time that the entire cycle has ever been presented continuously in the UK.

Part One: Boyhood 1868 – 1889
James Connolly, born among the Irish in Edinburgh, can find no work, so he joins the Army and is sent to Ireland. He discovers Irish nationalism and international socialism: he discovers a wife: he discovers his political destiny. He determines to go elsewhere.

Part Two: Apprenticeship 1889 – 1896
James Connolly, in Edinburgh once more and married, gains experience in the pioneer socialist movement. He seeks political office and fails to find it: he seeks to earn a living and fails likewise. He determines to go elsewhere.

Part Three: Professional 1896 – 1903
Act I: A Movement with Some Purpose.
James Connolly becomes a political organiser in Dublin and founds the Irish Socialist Republican Party. He meets the New Ireland of the literary renaissance and disrupts the royal jubilee.

**Act II: Alarums and Excursions.**

James Connolly, in Dublin, leads the Irish Socialist Republican Party in militant opposition to British imperialism and the Boer War. He is criticised by Keir Hardie of the British Labour movement.

**Act III: Outmanoeuvered.**

James Connolly is rejoiced to find the Irish Socialist Republican Party recognised by the Socialist International. Rosa Luxembourg – in controversy with Kautsky – throws doubt upon Connolly’s view of Irish nationhood. The Irish Socialist Republican Party throws doubt upon his views of political priorities. He determines to go elsewhere.

**Part Four: The New World 1903 – 1910**

**Act I: Into the Party.**

James Connolly emigrates to the United States. He joins the Socialist Labour Party, led by Daniel De Leon. He is frustrated by its doctrinaire secretarianism.

**Act II: Out of the Party.**

James Connolly greets with enthusiasm the Industrial Workers of the World, believing them to be the great new revolutionary force. He forms the Irish Socialist Federation among immigrants of the USA. Unable to accommodate himself to De Leon’s control of the Socialist Labour Party, he determines to pursue politics elsewhere.

**Act III: Forward to the Revolution…?**

James Connolly, as IWW organiser, struggles against odds in New York. He helps the presidential election campaign of Eugene Debs. He becomes a paid worker for the Socialist Party of America. He determines to go elsewhere.

**Part Five: The Great Lockout 1910 – 1914**

**Act I: Donnybrook Fair.**

James Connolly returns to Ireland and its furious political and trade-union confusions. He meets James Larkin, who sends him to Belfast to organise the New Irish Transport Workers’ Union. He has ideological clashes with William Walker of the Northern Ireland labour movement.

**Act II: Keir Hardie’s Promise.**

James Connolly continues his work in Ireland for the Labour movement. The Irish Labour Party is founded. The Dublin Employers’ Federation is founded. The ‘Great Lockout’ is imposed: Larkin, aided by Connolly, responds with a general strike.

**Act III: Once More Go Down to Hell.**

James Connolly sees the Dublin General Strike collapse when the British Trade Union leadership fails to respond to the demands of its rank and file that the Irish workers be given positive support. The Irish National Volunteers are formed. The climate of violence intensifies.


**Prologue: King Conaire and the Prohibitions.**

In ancient times good King Conaire saved the country from its enemies by fighting them against all odds: even though the circumstances of the battle were contrary to the ritual prohibitions prescribed by his Druids.

**Act I: Clouds of War.**

James Connolly confronts the aftermath of the great lockout in Dublin. The Irish constitutional crisis brings fear of civil war, combining with the threat of a general strike in Britain. International imperial rivalries simultaneously intensify.

**Act II: World War to Civil War.**

James Connolly sees international socialism collapse in the face of the outbreak of the world war. Resolute in his opposition to imperialism in all its forms, he seeks desperately for allies – in particular from among members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood within the National Volunteers.

**Act III: The Rising.**

James Connolly brings the Irish Citizen Army into the Rising of Easter 1916: and thereby becomes the first working-class leader to enter the world conflict in the cause of socialism. He is compelled to surrender to superior force: and is shot to death.

Playwright Margaretta D’Arcy was born in 1934, and is an actress, playwright and peace-activist. Her plays include Ars Longa Vita Brevis, The Royal Pardon, Friday’s Hiding, The Hero Rises Up, Muggins is a Martyr, Vandaleur’s Folly, The Little Gray Home in the West, The Business of Good Government, The Happy Haven and The Island of the Mighty (all with John Arden) and Prison-Voice of Countess Markievicz. D’Arcy has also worked as a film director. Her film Big Plane, Small Axe was awarded 2nd prize for Best Feature Documentary at the Galway Film Fleadh. Her radio play A Suburban Suicide (also written with John Arden) was broadcast on the BBC in 1995. Her books include Tell Them Everything was about her experiences in Armagh Jail on the NO Wash Campaign was an alternative best seller in 1981, Awkward Corners
Playwright **John Arden** (1930–2012) is best known for his modern classic *Serjeant Musgrave’s Dance* which received its world premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in 1959 for which Arden received the Evening Standard Theatre Award for ‘Most Promising Playwright’. His other plays include *The Waters of Babylon*, *Live Like Pigs*, *The Workhouse Donkey* and *The Bagman*. He frequently collaborated with his wife Margaretta D’Arcy. His 1982 novel *Silence Among the Weapons* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

Director **Shane Dempsey**’s recent work includes *The Master And Margarita* (The Bussey Building and Te Pooka Edinburgh), *Seven Jewish Children* (Arcola Theatre), *LOL* by Lee Mattinson (Clifftown Theatre, Southend-on-Sea), *The Bay* (Theatre503, The Space and Te Pooka, Edinburgh) and *The Girl In The Box* (Clifftown Theatre, Southend-on-Sea, and RADA Studios). Assistant Direction includes assisting Nicolas Kent *Called to Account* (Tricycle Theatre), Jamie Lloyd on *The Caretaker* (Tricycle Theatre), Suzanne Gorman on *Moonwalking In Chinatown* (Soho Theatre). He has run Stagecraft – one of Ireland’s leading youth theatre’s – since 1998 including programming work from Moira Buffini, Enda Walsh and Jack Thorne. He is also the founding member of Fragments, a dynamic physical ensemble in LondonShane was funded by The Arts Council of Ireland to train as a director at E15 Acting School. He went on to be invited to observe Lev Dodin of the Maly Theatre of St Petersburg in Paris and has also observed actor training in Moscow at the Vakhtangov Theatre. He has also led workshops in New York, Bangkok, Moscow and Beijing. His work also includes a landmark digital film archive, *Mothers Of Modern Ireland – A People's History* which can be viewed at [www.mothersofmodernireland.com](http://www.mothersofmodernireland.com)

**The cast is:**

**Shane Armstrong**
Trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art.
Theatre includes *The Last Manor Standing* (Pleasance London), *Blood on the 3for2 Display* (Soho Theatre), *Transitions* (Warehouse Theatre, Croydon), *The Lamplighters* (Tabard Theatre), *Screaming Inside* (Tristan Bates Theatre and The Basement, Brighton), *As You Like It* and *Henry V* (British Shakespeare Company) and *Cinderella* (Sheringham Little Theatre).
Film includes *Dream On, Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County Wars*, *The Magic Flute* and *Bright Young Things*.
Short Film includes *A Hitman Walks Into A Church*.

**Helen Belbin**
Productions at the Finborough Theatre include *The Flowers O’Edinburgh* and *Northern Star*.
Trained at Drama Studio London.
Film includes *Mad to be Normal, Waterboys, Always in the Present, Horizon* and *Je Suis Daddy*.
Radio includes *Gulliver’s Travels, Jamaica Inn, The Saturday Review, HR*, and *Front Row*.

**Paul Carroll**
Trained at Bull Alley, Dublin.
Comedy includes *Carroll and Hodgson: So-Fisticates* (Soho Theatre) and *Bite Size Comedy* (Bridewell Theatre).
Film includes *Chosen*.
Short Film includes *The Wrong Change, Drone, Lonely at the Top* and *Story of Our Time*.

**Melissa Dalton**
Trained at Guildford School of Acting.
Theatre includes *The Forest* (VAULT Festival), *The Wind in the Willows* (Waterloo East Theatre), *Grace and Maggie* (International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival), *Beauty and the Beast* (National Concert Hall, Dublin) and *The Cut, Fefu and
Press Information

Her Friends, Andorra and Leaves of Glass (Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin). Theatre whilst training includes The Crucible, A Matter of Life and Death, A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Hedda Gabler. Short Film includes Siblings and Room to Let.

Aoife Kibane
Trained at London School of Musical Theatre.
Theatre includes Just the Beginning (Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec) and Redhead (Bridewell Theatre). Theatre whilst training includes Marriage à la Modè and The Country.
Television includes Seven Women, Instrumental and Alfric.
Radio includes Search for Sandy.

Padraig Lynch
Trained at Drama Centre London.
Theatre includes A View from the Bridge (Wyndham’s Theatre and The Young Vic), By the Border (National Theatre), Antigone in New York (The Rag Factory), Let the Right One In (Apollo Theatre and National Theatre of Scotland), The Kindness of Strangers (Southwark Playhouse), The Trail (Barbican Theatre), The Shawshank Redemption (Secret Cinema), The Quare Fella (Tricycle Theatre), The Beauty of Queen Linane (Salisbury Playhouse), Juno and the Paycock (National Theatre of Ireland – Abbey Theatre), Hamlet (Clwyd Theatr Cymru), Mariana Pineda (Arcola Theatre), Zoyka’s Apartment (Old Red Lion Theatre and Edinburgh Festival), Macbeth (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), Dracula (Hackney Empire) and Roosters (Bush Theatre).
Television includes Fair City and The Cloning of Joanna May.
Film includes Night Shift, Duchemin’s Breakfast, Northern Paradigm, Conspiracy of Silence, The Courier, Taffin, The Killing Zone and The Summer House.

Scott Lyons
Trained at East 15 Acting School.
Theatre includes Yokes Night (Stay Up Late Collective at Bear Trap Theatre), Going Away Days (Barbican Theatre, Plymouth), It’s Always Easier for the Others (Yard Theatre), and Cabaret Show (Camden People’s Theatre). Theatre whilst training includes The Tempest and Fuente Ovejuna.
Short Film includes Memoriam, Lashes and A Good Friday.
Scott has received the Equity Student Member of 2015 Bursary Award and the E15 Scholarship Bursary Award for New Companies for his production company, Stay Up Late Collective.

Lucia McAnespie
Trained at Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.
Theatre includes The Silver Tassie (National Theatre), Shutters (Park Theatre), The Factory Girls (Millennium Forum, Derry), Carthaginians (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), Happiness (Edinburgh Playhouse Studio), Twelfth Night (Ludlow Castle) and One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest (World Tour).
Television includes Line of Duty 2 and Seconds From Disaster.
Radio includes Detective Baldi Series, An Incident in Bethlehem, Not For Life, Rutabega Romance and The Price of a Kiss.
Short Film includes The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant, Stumped and The Devil You Know.

Niamh McGowan
Trained at Central School of Speech and Drama.
Theatre includes Liolà (National Theatre), The Boy Who Became a Beetle (Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton), Three Wise Monkeys (National Tour), The Missing (New Diorama Theatre), and Orpheus and Eurydice (National Youth Theatre).
Theatre whilst training includes Princess Sharon, Banished, As I Lay Dying, Macbeth, School for Scandal, To Be Taken With Water, Much Ado About Nothing and The Seagull.
Short Film includes Rhonna and Donna and Audley End.

Aiden O’Neil
Theatre includes Dancing Shoes (Grand Opera House, Belfast), Best of Friends (Landor Theatre), Women on the Verge of HRT (National Tour), A Dream Across the Ocean (Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon), Dancing Shoes (National Tour), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Ludlow Castle), Stones in His Pockets (National Tour), Dance Hall Days (Riverside Studios) and Bedazzled (National Tour).
Television includes May Panto Party, That’s Ireland and Global Gathering.

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THEGREATWAR100 series is a new occasional series of works about – or written during – the Great War to be presented by the Finborough Theatre from 2014 to 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 4 APRIL 2016 AT 7.00PM
PHOTOCALL: MONDAY, 4 APRIL 2016 AT 5.00PM-5.30PM

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED
Box Office 0844 847 1652   Book online at www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays and Mondays, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18 April 2016 at 7.00pm
Saturday, 23 April 2016 from 12 noon
Sunday, 24 April 2016 from 12 noon

SINGLE PERFORMANCES
Monday, 4 April 2016 at 7.00pm – Parts 1 and 2.
Sunday, 10 April 2016 at 7.00pm – Part 3.
Monday, 11 April 2016 at 7.00pm – Part 4.
Sunday, 17 April 2016 at 7.00pm – Part 5.
Monday, 18 April 2016 at 7.00pm – Part 6.

ALL DAY PERFORMANCES – COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE
Saturday, 23 April 2016 at 12 noon – Parts 1 through 4.
Sunday, 24 April 2016 at 12 noon – Parts 5 and 6

Tickets for evening readings £12 all seats.
Tickets for all-day readings £20 (covering both performances). Come and go as you please, subject to availability.
The play will be presented as a staged reading.

Performance Length: Parts 1 and 2 last approximately 2 hours 30 minutes including one interval.
Parts 3, 4, 5 and 6 last approximately three and a half hours with two intervals.
The all day performance on Saturday, 23 April will last approximately nine and a half hours including eight intervals.
The all day performance on Sunday, 24 April will last approximately seven hours including six intervals.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact
Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or 07977 173135
Download press releases and images at http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/press-resources.php